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July 17, 2004

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Officer

Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director of Public Health and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **WESTNILE VIRUS ACTIVITY SUMMARY REPORT #3**

On April 27, 2004, the Board approved a motion by Supervisor Antonovich, directing the Directors of Health Services and Public Health, to implement the Department's planned West Nile Virus (WNV) awareness and surveillance program and to provide monthly updates. This is our third update.

BACKGROUND

Because of its surprisingly rapid spread across the nation, as well as its considerable and increasing morbidity and mortality, WNV is a disease of significant public health importance. Over the course of a few short years, the virus has become established in nearly all of the contiguous United States and its rising human toll is alarming. Nationwide, the incidence of WNV disease has soared from 66 confirmed cases and 9 deaths in 2001 to nearly 10,000 cases and 262 deaths in 2003. In 2002, the first locally acquired human case of WNV in California was identified in our county, and last season one case of WNV fever was acquired in Los Angeles County (LAC).

LOS ANGELES COUNTY WNV SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES—2004

As of July 9, 2004, two cases of WNV fever have been identified and confirmed and one case of probable encephalitis due to WNV infection has been identified and is waiting public health laboratory confirmatory testing within Los Angeles County. All three WNV cases are males (ages 59-70) and reside within the San Gabriel Valley. The two cases of WNV fever were evaluated as outpatients and have now recovered. The elderly man with encephalitis was hospitalized and is now recovering at home. The San Gabriel Mosquito and Vector Control District is aware of these human cases and has stepped up surveillance and abatement within these communities.

To enhance human disease identification and pinpoint prevention efforts, laboratory confirmed cases of WNV infection have been added to the LAC list of reportable diseases as of July 1, 2004. Physician and laboratories must report cases within one working day. It is expected WNV infections will be a California state reportable disease in the coming month.

In addition to human WNV cases, WNV-dead birds, mosquito pools, and sentinel chickens continue to be identified. As of July 9, 2004, 381 WNV-positive dead birds have been identified in Los Angeles County. This amount is nearly half of the number of birds obtained for the entire state (785 birds). Moreover, since the confirmation of WNV is now established in many areas of the county, dead bird collection by the Health Department will be discontinued in over 100 ZIP code areas (see attached) encompassing 64 cities within LAC. However, phoned reports of dead birds will continue to be received since these are a valuable component of WNV surveillance—they provide an on-going indicator of presumed West Nile virus activity and help focus containment activities.

Since mosquitoes serve as vectors for disease transmission, WNV-positive mosquito pools are another critical environmental indicator; as such, mosquito pools are routinely tested for the presence of WNV. To date, 33 pools have tested positive in Los Angeles County. And similar to the proportion of WNV-infected dead birds identified across the state, the nearly one-third of the positive mosquito pools in California (114 pools) were identified in our county.

In an effort to increase public awareness of the risk of WNV infection in LAC and Southern CA and to provide support for local public health jurisdictions, Julie Gerberding, MD, MPH, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Richard Joseph Jackson, California State Health Officer, received a briefing on LAC efforts in WNV prevention and surveillance. They were joined by both Supervisor Gloria Molina and Dr. Jonathan E. Fielding in a press conference at the Roybal Clinic in East Los Angeles on July 8, 2004.

Additionally, in June, approximately 28,000 CD-ROMs with West Nile Virus prevention information were mailed to health care providers.

With the identification of human cases and strong environmental indicators indicating the presence of WNV, it is extremely likely that more human cases are likely. Accordingly, surveillance, containment, and public education activities continue to meet this increased public health need.

TLG:cp
404:015

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Office
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors



**WEST NILE VIRUS
ACTIVITY SUMMARY #6
(July 7, 2004)**

West Nile virus infection now reportable in Los Angeles County!

In order to improve disease identification and pinpoint prevention efforts, laboratory confirmed cases of West Nile virus infection have been added to the Los Angeles County list of reportable diseases. Physicians and laboratories must report cases within one (1) working day. To date, two locally acquired cases of West Nile fever have been identified in Los Angeles County. Both cases were not hospitalized and are recovering.

West Nile virus is now considered enzootic in Los Angeles County—infected dead birds have been recovered from nearly all areas of our county and dead bird collection will be discontinued in 90 ZIP code areas as confirmation of the virus is now well established for those locations. Phone reports of dead birds will continue to be received since this provides valuable information for WNV surveillance.

POSITIVE WNV TESTS, YEAR-TO-DATE, 2004*

	Human Cases	Equine Cases	Environmental Surveillance		
			Dead Birds	Sentinel Chickens	Mosquito Pools
Los Angeles County	2	0	309**	4	30
California	16	8	688	32	114

* As of 7/7/04—data are provisional and subject to change.

** As noted below, bird collection has been discontinued in many Los Angeles areas; as such, this frequency underestimates the number of WNV-infected dead birds occurring in our county.

LABORATORY CONFIRMED WEST NILE INFECTION NOW REPORTABLE:

Effective immediately, West Nile virus (WNV) infection, when documented by laboratory findings, has been added to the list of mandated reportable diseases and conditions in Los Angeles County (California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Sections 2503 and 2505). Physicians and laboratories must report patients with a positive WNV test within one (1) working day using a standard Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR). Reports can be submitted by facsimile (888-397-3778) or called into our Morbidity Department during normal business hours (888-397-3993).

In light of the expected increases in human cases of WNV to occur in our county this season, this enhanced surveillance is an important method of improving timely disease identification and enacting localized prevention efforts to limit additional cases.

While WNV infection is of great concern, the likelihood of infection and disease progression is, nonetheless, rare—only one in every five persons infected with WNV will experience symptoms. Testing for WNV should only be performed on patients with the following signs or symptoms:

- aseptic meningitis,
- encephalitis or acute flaccid paralysis, or
- West Nile fever (characterized by headache, fever, muscle pain, and often rash, with symptoms lasting more than 7 days).

For questions regarding the reporting and testing of West Nile virus, visit:

www.lapublichealth.org/acd/VectorWestNile.htm

or contact

Acute Communicable Disease Control

213-240-7941

Mon-Fri 8:00am – 5:00pm

CESSATION OF DEAD BIRD COLLECTION:

The Health Department has discontinued dead bird collection in numerous areas across Los Angeles and Southern California since confirmation of the virus has been already well documented in those locations. In some special circumstances, local Vector Control may still decide to collect and test dead birds. Phoned reports of dead birds are still important and will continue to be received since they provide an on-going indicator of presumed virus activity and help focus containment efforts.

ZIP code areas where dead bird collection has been discontinued.
(7-7-04)

91801	Alhambra	91731	El Monte	91016	Monrovia	90731	San Pedro
91803	Alhambra	91732	El Monte	90640	Montebello	90670	Santa Fe Springs
91001	Altadena	90248	Gardena	91754	Monterey Park	91423	Sherman Oaks
91006	Arcadia	90249	Gardena	91755	Monterey Park	91024	Sierra Madre
91007	Arcadia	91740	Glendora	91343	North Hills	90280	South Gate
90701	Artesia	91741	Glendora	91324	Northridge	91030	South Pasadena
91702	Azusa	91344	Granada Hills	91325	Northridge	91342	Sylmar
91706	Baldwin Park	91745	Hacienda Heights	91326	Northridge	91780	Temple City
90201	Bell Gardens	90710	Harbor City	91330	Northridge	91042	Tujunga
91010	Bradbury	90716	Hawaiian Gardens	90650	Norwalk	91401	Van Nuys
91504	Burbank	90205	Inglewood	91402	Panorama City	91405	Van Nuys
91505	Burbank	91706	Irwindale	91107	Pasadena	91722	West Covina
91304	Canoga Park	90631	La Habra Heights	91108	Pasadena	91790	West Covina
90248	Carson	91342	Lakeview Terrace	91766	Pomona	91791	West Covina
90703	Cerritos	90712	Lakewood	91767	Pomona	90069	West Hollywood
91745	City of Industry	90713	Lakewood	90272	Rancho Palos Verdes	90602	Whittier
91711	Claremont	90638	La Mirada	91335	Reseda	90603	Whittier
91722	Covina	91744	La Puente	91770	Rosemead	90604	Whittier
91724	Covina	91750	La Verne	91748	Rowland Heights	90605	Whittier
90240	Downey	90804	Long Beach	91773	San Dimas	90606	Whittier
90241	Downey	90807	Long Beach	91775	San Gabriel	91306	Winnetka
90242	Downey	90808	Long Beach	91776	San Gabriel		
91010	Duarte	90044	Los Angeles	91108	San Marino		

Confirmation of WNV also has been well established in six additional areas (91506–Burbank, 90660–Pico Rivera, 91733–South El Monte, 91406–Van Nuys, 90601–Whittier, 90670–Whittier). However, dead bird collection will continue in these areas in collaboration with statewide surveillance and research.

West Nile virus-infected dead birds:

Often, the first sign that WNV is prevalent in an area is a die-off of wild birds from the corvid family—especially crows.

Statewide, nearly half of the WNV-infected dead birds have been recovered from Los Angeles County, and most of those from eastern cities. Presently, infected dead birds have been recovered from nearly all areas of our county.

